

**National Grassroots Summit on Radioactive Waste Policy  
June 4-6, 2010 Chicago, Illinois inspired this letter**

June 15, 2010

Chairman Hamilton and Chairman Scowcroft  
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

On June 4, 5 and 6, a National Grassroots Summit on Radioactive Waste was held in Chicago to bring together community organization representatives affected by commercial and government nuclear activities. In addition to people from across the U.S., we were joined by members of Native American tribes, a Canadian, and representatives from a group in Australia. During the summit a public forum was also held that offered interested people the opportunity to attend workshops and meet with experts and those who have lived with and worked on nuclear waste issues in both commercial nuclear power plant communities and regions affected by nuclear weapons facilities and/or activities. That forum was attended by Mary Woollen from your staff, and we appreciate your interest and support that made her involvement and interaction with us possible.

Mary told us that she will report to the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) regarding her participation and conversations with us. However, we believe it is also necessary to directly convey our message and some requests to the BRC.

The BRC has a schedule and deadlines for considering matters of major concern to us and we very much appreciate knowing dates and times of the upcoming meetings as well as your anticipated timeframe for the release of the draft report. All decisions and recommendations from the BRC will address matters that we have been working on for decades. Many of us have written to the BRC, listened to the meetings online, and traveled in order to attend the meetings because the BRC's work and decisions are so important to us.

How is the BRC responding to information it is receiving from outside sources? Will our continued role as limited participants and outside observers have any meaningful impact on the BRC deliberations and the final outcome? We have appreciated seeing documents on the website, but would like to understand how they are being included in the process.

How do you define the problem that the BRC has been directed to make recommendations on? Solving a problem or even effectively examining it requires that you have agreement on the starting point, understood by those participating in the effort, so as to define goals or objectives.

Will the BRC draft report include dissenting opinions or will the report reflect only the majority view?

We ask that the BRC issue a draft preliminary report for public comment. Our experience has been that often there is almost no difference between agency drafts and final reports. We strongly believe that by the time you have assembled and discussed data and written and approved a draft report, it is much too late for the consideration of new information and ideas. Issuing a draft document would give us confidence that you actually were open to the inclusion of our views, opinions or ideas.

Many of us are frustrated by the lack of representation on the BRC of public interest organizations and longtime community advocates. We agree with the concerns expressed by Tom Cochran from the Natural Resources Defense Council at your last meeting.\* We also have a deep concern about the make-up of the BRC's subcommittees. We strongly urge you to include three people on each of the subcommittees as voting members representing advocacy organizations and tribes. Missing the input, knowledge and participation of people who have played active roles at Department of Energy, civilian nuclear power, and commercial waste treatment and disposal sites will seriously compromise your research and fact finding efforts.

Those additional subcommittee members must receive the same funds for expenses provided to Commission members. We also request that committee meetings be available, at least through telephone hook-up, where people can hear the proceedings and be able to comment, and that transcripts and minutes be made.

As observers of the BRC meetings we sense that you are thinking about how people can be brought to mutual agreement when considering difficult issues surrounding nuclear waste management, storage and disposal. We have spent years exchanging experiences and information with others nationally and internationally and have in fact reached many areas of agreement. For example, 283 groups have signed the Principles for Safeguarding Nuclear Waste at Reactors, which you have received. We have developed good and clear understanding of the problems posed by nuclear activities and associated wastes, the impacts, the risks, and public perceptions. We also have longtime experience with government agencies, utilities and all levels of decision makers. We believe that we can bring valuable insights to the Commission. But it must be through formal interaction where we have active inclusion.

The BRC process is moving forward rapidly, and we look forward to your prompt, written response to our questions, comments and recommendations, particularly those focused on the make up and process for the subcommittees.

Sincerely,

Don Hancock  
Southwest Research and Information Center  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Beatrice Brailsford  
Snake River Alliance  
Pocatello, Idaho

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\* "...it's our view and the view of many NGOs that we communicate with, that this panel is not balanced. And I would urge you to balance the panel before you go forward."

Susan Gordon  
Alliance for Nuclear Accountability  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Allison Fisher  
Public Citizen  
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Susan Corbett  
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(Healing Ourselves and Mother Earth)  
Tecopa, California

Cc: Mary Woollen